

PROJECT FOR THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF NURSING PERSONNEL

(BR-0305)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Borrower:	Government of Brazil	
Executing agency:	Ministry of Health	
Amount and source:	IDB:	US\$185 million
	Local counterpart contribution:	<u>US\$185 million</u>
	Total:	US\$370 million
Financial terms and conditions:	Amortization period:	25 years
	Disbursement period:	4 years
	Grace period:	4 years
	Interest rate:	variable
	Inspection and supervision:	1%
	Credit fee:	0.75%
	Currency:	U.S. dollar (multicurrency pool)
Objectives:	<p>The aim of the project is to improve the quality of outpatient and inpatient care through the professionalization of auxiliary personnel, particularly in establishments under contract with the Unified Health System (SUS) to provide care to the low-income population. It is intended to: (i) reduce the shortage of skilled nursing auxiliaries; (ii) promote the development of this segment of the health-care labor market; (iii) strengthen the regulatory framework and processes that ensure its effectiveness, by correcting existing weaknesses; and (iv) create technical and financial conditions for the sustainability of training for auxiliary nursing personnel.</p>	
Description:	<p>The project will achieve these objectives through its two components, which are: (i) schooling and professionalization of nursing personnel; and (ii) institutional strengthening of the agencies that regulate technical human resources training for the SUS.</p> <p>Under the first component, subprojects will be submitted to a competitive fund to finance professionalization and schooling courses (primary education equivalence certificate) for unskilled nurse's aides. The courses will be provided by establishments that: (i) offer both professionalization and schooling in association with providers that employ nursing auxiliaries, and – if they do not have teaching capacity</p>	

of their own – with training organizations committed to the project; and (ii) demonstrate that their proposal meets a specific demand of nurse's aides in the project area.

The second component will seek to ensure the viability and sustainability of the first component's activities by preventing future hiring of unskilled nurse's aides, expanding opportunities for the training of nursing auxiliaries, and introducing systems to raise and regulate the quality of their professional training. To achieve this goal, special attention will be given to sustainable mechanisms for regulating the market and financing the professionalization of nurse's aides during and after the program. The key elements of this process are: (i) teacher training for the instructors and evaluators needed for the professionalization courses and the skills certification system; (ii) establishment of information systems on training and employment opportunities; (iii) design and implementation of a skills certification system; and (iv) consolidation of quality reference training centers with operational, administrative and financial autonomy. Additionally, the program, as part of its financing structure, includes a formal commitment by the Workers' Support Fund to finance training activities assigned priority by the Ministry of Health.

**Bank's country
and sector
strategy:**

The project will contribute mainly to the following elements of the Bank's current health strategy, as described in the country paper for Brazil: (i) combining the efforts of public and private institutions to improve health; and (ii) strengthening public regulatory capacity. Its specific strategy is to intervene in the training market and the regulatory framework for nursing auxiliaries, addressing the root causes of such a large mass of unskilled nursing personnel (see paragraphs 1.1, 1.5, 1.6, and 1.7).

**Environmental
and social
review:**

The Committee on Environment and Social Impact approved the project and indicated that no subsequent report or action would be required. It recommended that the courses include topics relating to reproductive health (see paragraph 4.12).

Benefits:

The main benefits of the project are: (i) improved quality of inpatient and outpatient care thanks to the professionalization of nursing auxiliaries; and (ii) establishment of an institutional base and favorable market conditions for the training of technical health-care personnel after PROFAC has been completed.

Risks:

Trained nursing auxiliaries may move away, making it necessary to continue hiring unskilled nurse's aides. Given the segmentation of the labor market, nursing auxiliaries could move from rural or less populated areas to the larger cities, where salaries are higher. This would force institutions suffering such a loss of personnel to continue hiring unskilled personnel. The eligibility criteria focus special attention on professionalization subprojects in less populated areas and on

continuing the regulatory role played by professional associations, which has proven effective in recent years in restricting the open hiring of unskilled nursing personnel.

Cultural resistance to the certification and information systems. In a culture traditionally centered on the prequalification of teaching institutions, these innovations could generate opposition within the nurses' association (and other professional associations) and training institutions. To minimize this risk, these associations will be actively involved in designing the certification system, and training providers will be involved in designing the public information system, among other measures.

**Special
contractual
clauses:**

The following would be conditions precedent to the first disbursement:

- a) Submission of the signed agreement between the executing agency and the agency that will contract for goods and services (paragraph 3.7);
- b) Submission of evidence of the official entry into force of the Operating Regulations (paragraph 3.8(a));
- c) Submission of signed contracts with selected regional agencies (paragraphs 3.8(c) and 3.11) representing 50% of the nurse's aides identified;
- d) Submission of the agreement with the Bank of Brazil for the registration of students in project courses (paragraph 3.8(b)) [condition already fulfilled];
- e) Submission of the agreement signed with the agency that will carry out the teacher training subcomponent (paragraph 3.8(g)).

As a condition precedent to the transfer of resources to any subproject, the agreement signed by the executing agency and the regional agency responsible for the subproject area in question is to be presented to the Bank in advance.

As a condition precedent to the first disbursement under the skills certification subcomponent, evidence is to be presented of the planned establishment of the consultative and technical boards envisaged for the certification system (paragraph 3.32).

Once 50% of the component I resources have been committed, the restriction relating to proportionality within the territory of a given state will be lifted (paragraph 3.2), although no state may receive more than 35% of the total resources (paragraph 3.2).

Poverty-targeting and social sector classification:	This operation qualifies as a social equity enhancing project, as described in the indicative targets mandated by the Bank's Eighth Replenishment (document AB-1704).
Exceptions to Bank policy:	None
Procurement:	Since procurement relates mainly to training services, the loan agreement includes an Annex D covering the project's requirements and Bank policies (paragraph 3.42). The procedures outlined in Annex D will apply to subprojects under component I. Since the subprojects will be awarded on a multiple basis according to quality criteria, a fixed unit price will be used (paragraph 3.42 (iii)). International competitive bidding will be used for procurements valued at over US\$1.5 million. The standard policies of the Bank, presented in Annex B, will apply for the procurement of related goods and services, and those in Annex C will apply for the contracting of consulting services (paragraph 3.43). It is recommended that an agency be hired directly to administer the contracting of consultants and other required activities, in accordance with chapter GS-403 of the Procurement Manual (paragraph 3.6).
Disbursements:	Given the decentralized nature of project implementation, the involvement of some 10 regional agencies and 300 operators throughout the country, and the cost of the activities contemplated, a revolving fund of 10% of the loan amount is recommended (paragraph 3.47). The fund will be replenished against consolidated documentation – to be submitted by the project management unit – on the spending, components, and coexecuting agencies of the project.